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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MAYSAN'S GOVERNOR: JAM ASSOCIATE AND RISING SHI'A  
STAR

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Robert Waller for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

1 . (S/NF) Summary and Comment: Maysan Governor Adil Mohoder Radhi al-Maliki is an astute, ambitious, and pragmatic young politician, closely aligned to Moqtada al-Sadr (MAS). Allegedly a former JAM commander, Maliki reportedly has links to the al-Gharawi terrorist cell and had a bitter relationship with Maysan's (Badrism) former Chief of Police. He may be connected to MAS through a former acquaintance of MAS, father now undergoing cancer treatment in Iran. His relationship with the Coalition has fluctuated over time, and he is said to fear other powerful provincial JAM/OMS figures and will likely accede to their demands. Well-connected in Baghdad, Maliki has repeatedly refused ministerial positions. PRT Maysan assesses that Maliki's immediate priority is the completion of key development projects in Maysan. End Summary and Comment.

#### Personal Background

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12. (S/NF) Governor Adil Mohoder Radhi al-Maliki was born to Badriyah Kadhim on July 17, 1970 and grew up in al-Majar al-Kabir. He has at least two children, Zahra (circa five years old) and Moqtada (an infant named after Moqtada al-Sadr (MAS)). Although Maliki speaks and understands English well, he sometimes conceals this from his interlocutors. The departing former Multinational Division/Southeast (MND(SE)) General Officer Commanding (GOC) described Maliki as the most effective and astute politician that he had met in Iraq. Maliki has assiduously cultivated an image of loyalty, competence, and combat effectiveness. He studied electrical engineering at the prestigious Baghdad Institute of Technology, reportedly worked as a telecommunications engineer, and still takes an interest in engineering issues. One former engineering schoolmate (now living abroad) expressed astonishment that Maliki became a provincial governor, implying he was not a particularly distinguished student.

#### A JAM partisan influenced by outside powers

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13. (S/NF) Maliki reportedly rose rapidly through the ranks to become a JAM Company Commander, leading combat operations against the British at Camp Abu Naji and later acting as a signatory to the August 2004 ceasefire agreement. As of July 2006, British officials suspected that Maliki was associated with the Ahmad Abu Sajad al-Gharawi terrorist cell, while qualifying that he may have not supported them personally. According to British authorities, in early June 2006 the Governor demanded not only the release of a JAM sniper arrested by the Iraqi Police Service (IPS), but also the return of his rifle. He reportedly intervened similarly on other occasions. Maliki is known to have had a bitter relationship with the previous (Badrism) Chief of Police and regularly sought to check Badr's power.

¶4. (S/NF) Maliki was elected by the PC in March 2005 as a member of the Hussein Ideology Front (HIF). Most Maysani PC members likewise belong to HIF. He and his staff have repeatedly made their Sadrism affiliation clear to Coalition Forces (CF) and the PRT. Despite his official status as the province's chief executive, Maliki is strongly influenced by several powerful constituencies: 1) Sadr and his OMS surrogates seeking to consolidate political gains, 2) armed JAM leaders seeking to dominate the South's militia landscape, and 3) Iranian security forces intent on establishing a permissive operational environment in support of their political-military goals in the South. These constituencies are not necessarily harmonized and may present him with difficult trade-offs.

Friends in high places?  
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¶5. (S/NF) MAS travels to Maysan periodically and has met with the Maliki there. Maliki reportedly relies on a close adviser and de facto deputy Governor by the name of Mohan Abdullah Sultan, aka Abu Mariam for political advice. PRT Maysan has yet to meet Abu Mariam but understands he is a respected elder who apparently had a relationship with Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr. Abu Mariam is now reportedly undergoing chemotherapy in Iran. Maliki enjoys positive working relationships with Iraqi officials in other parties due to his assistance to Iran and UK-based exiles under Saddam's regime. He has easy access to the Prime Minister and Vice President Abdul-Mehdi, as well as selected cabinet officials. He also has strong connections in the Amanat in Baghdad and travels to the capital frequently.

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Uneven relationship with the Coalition  
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¶6. (S/NF) In line with his origins as a JAM fighter, Maliki has had an uneven relationship with the Coalition. British commanders of the Maysan Battle Group and MND(SE) regularly transitioned after six months, and Maliki and his staff have noted that they have had so many Coalition interlocutors that we seem almost a blur. At times, he and his associates have complained about unfulfilled promises made (or implied) by Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) officials. Maliki is careful to keep his distance from CF and limit CF's ability to intervene and conduct operations in Maysan. As reported septel, a trusted aide confided that Maliki would support technical and project-related engagement with the PRT but occasionally feel the need to make populist and anti-Coalition statements to retain his political credibility. According to an NGO official who knows him, the Governor is unable to fully express himself because of outside OMS/JAM pressure.

Official relationship with Iran  
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¶7. (S/NF) Maliki travels to Iran from time to time for official duties. He accompanied Prime Minister al-Jaafari to Tehran in September 2005, after which he announced that the border crossing point at al-Sheeb would be opened. In January 2006 he accepted an invitation from the Governor in Ahwaz, Khuzestan and crossed at al-Sheeb. In April 2007, the Governor traveled to Khuzestan again, this time visiting Shush/Susa. After this trip, al-Maliki publicly announced an agreement with the Government of Iran to build a 1,000 unit housing complex in Maysan.

¶8. (S/NF) COMMENT: The Governor is a highly-ambitious and calculating pragmatist who threw in his lot early with MAS. We assess that he anticipated MAS, early wide appeal and used his ample charm, political charisma, and 2004 combat reputation to ingratiate himself with the leadership of OMS

in MAK. He is a survivor whose decisions (on allowing lethal aid smuggling or anything else) will be driven on whatever will preserve or strengthen his political career. Maliki will use his political force to move forward on large scale development projects. We assess that the Governor needs to balance the needs of several groups in order to preserve power.

19. (S/NF) Multiple sources report that MAS has offered Maliki a position as a Sadrism cabinet minister on multiple occasions. Maliki reportedly has refused the appointment because of the unstable political situation in the Cabinet, the dangerous security situation in Baghdad, and the belief that he could have a more positive impact at the local level.

We assess that the Governor's intermediate-range goal is to establish a reputation as a politician who delivers at the local and provincial level, with Maysan a stepping stone to a larger national role. His immediate priority is to develop the hydrocarbons infrastructure in Maysan in order to facilitate a transition from its agrarian roots. His vision for a planned city attempts to respond to the al-Amarah's unemployment, security and housing challenges. Despite his background as a JAM fighter, we would not be surprised if he were actually a moderating influence within OMS and advocated political instead of violent means to expand Sadrism (and indirectly his own) power. END COMMENT.  
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